

**Joint Committee of the Board of Health and Board of Education**  
**Minutes – May 24, 2004**

Members Present: Susan Genovese (Chair); Scott Goodman; Sheila Elliott, Pharm.D; Julie Beales, M.D.

Members Absent: Hunter Gaunt, M.D.

DOE Staff Present: Catherine Digilio-Grimes, Maureen Hjar, Vanessa Wigand

VDH Staff Present: Carol Pollock, Kathleen Sergent, Lauri Savage, Joe Hilbert

Others Present: Joyce Garner (Virginia Commission on Youth), Kathleen Griezak (Virginia Chapter, American Heart Association), Chuck DuVal (representing soft drink industry), Amanda Thomas (representing soft drink industry), Jeff Smith (representing vending machine industry), Dick Pulley (Virginia School Boards Association), and Bette Wheelan (Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals)

Minutes of April 12, 2004 meeting were approved.

The Joint Committee reviewed and discussed a draft Final Report prepared by staff. Based on the review and discussion, staff were instructed to revise the draft, in advance of the next meeting, as follows:

- ◆ Include a clearer definition of childhood obesity, noting that overweight is the proper term for children (analogous to the use of obese when referring to adults)
- ◆ Include a clear description of Body Mass Index, and include a BMI by age chart as an appendix
- ◆ Include more discussion of physical activity issues earlier in the report
- ◆ Provide adequate justification/documentation as a basis for recommending a specific nutrient content percentage that must be met by foods sold in schools. (Staff were directed to do the research necessary to identify such documentation)
- ◆ Include a description of the USDA nutritional requirements for school meal programs as an appendix.
- ◆ Determine whether there were any other states or organizations (e.g., Virginia Action for Healthy Kids) whose school nutritional standards could serve as a good model for Virginia.
- ◆ Include the Virginia Action for Healthy Kids nutrition guidelines as an appendix.
- ◆ Include mention of the fact that many local school divisions have already implemented innovative nutrition and physical fitness policies, and include a summary of those initiatives as an appendix.

- ◆ Describe the plans developed in Charlottesville to assess the impact, of the school division's recent decision to restrict access to certain junk foods, on childhood overweight.
- ◆ Reorganize the draft to separate recommended guidelines from recommended policy directives (mandates)

The various industry and organization representatives at the meeting made a number of comments in relation to the draft Final Report. These included:

- ◆ At its April meeting the Joint Committee indicated that the nutritional standards would be issued in the form of guidelines, but now they are being portrayed as a mandate;
- ◆ Nutritional standards could have fiscal implications for schools;
- ◆ The soft drink industry has not been invited to fully participate in the Joint Committee's process (i.e., we have not been invited to make a formal presentation);
- ◆ A national study has found that students purchase only one soft drink per week in school;
- ◆ There is a lack of scientific evidence of any relationship between soft drink consumption and obesity;
- ◆ The soft drink and vending industries are being portrayed unfavorably in the draft report;
- ◆ Increasing the restrictions on student access to vending machines will be the first step towards an ultimate complete ban on vending machines in schools;
- ◆ Restricting access to vending machines is an attack on the industry;
- ◆ Local School Boards desire maximum decisionmaking autonomy, and will resist any mandates from the State;
- ◆ School principals are concerned about the quality of the food in the school meal programs, but schools lack any authority over that food quality (it is subject to USDA regulation);
- ◆ The General Assembly has previously refused to support legislation restricting student access to vending machines, or establishing student health report cards; and
- ◆ If our organization's interests are not protected by the Board of Education, we will seek relief from the General Assembly.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 21<sup>st</sup> at 1:00 p.m. at the James Monroe Building in Richmond.